United Nations A/49/PV.108

General Assembly
Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

108th plenary meeting
Monday, 18 September 1995, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. ESSY ..... (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Agenda item 112 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/49/838/Add.5)

The President (*interpretation from French*): At the 107th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, held on Thursday 14 September, I informed the Assembly that, bearing in mind the communication dated 14 September addressed to me by the Secretary-General, distributed as provisional document A/49/838/Add.5, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania had made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. I also reported that Equatorial Guinea had made the necessary payment to bring its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. The final version of document A/49/838/Add.5, which the Assembly has before it today, has been amended on the basis of this new information.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 10 *(continued)*

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

The President (*interpretation from French*): Following the issuance in June 1992 of "An Agenda for Peace", an Informal Open-ended Working Group was established at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly to consider and respond to the Secretary-General's recommendation contained in the report. During that session, the Working Group submitted to the Assembly two resolutions, 47/120 A, entitled "An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy and related matters", and resolution 47/120 B, covering the remaining recommendations contained in the report.

As members will recall, at its 98th plenary meeting, on 10 March 1995, at the request of a number of delegations and bearing in mind the statement by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/PRST/1995/9, the Informal Open-ended Working Group was reconvened to consider An Agenda for Peace (A/47/277-S/24111) and its supplement, A/50/60-S/1995/1).

The President designated the Permanent Representative of Egypt, Ambassador Nabil Elaraby, and the Permanent Representative of Spain, Ambassador Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo, Chairman and Vice-Chairman, respectively. The Working Group met between 28 March and 14 September 1995.

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Following consultations among interested States, the Bureau identified key areas and established four subgroups to consider: first, the question of United Nations-imposed sanctions, coordinated by Ambassador Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim of Brazil; secondly, coordination, coordinated by Ambassador Hans Jacob Biørn Lian of Norway; thirdly, preventive diplomacy and peacemaking, coordinated by Ambassador Richard Butler of Australia; and fourthly, post-conflict peace-building, coordinated by Ms. Vijayalakshmi Menon, Minister Counsellor of Singapore. Substantive discussions were held in each of the subgroups, resulting in non-papers prepared by their respective coordinators. These non-papers contain elements to be incorporated into a future resolution or resolutions.

Owing to time constraints and ongoing consultations, however, the Working Group was unable to conclude its work and would like to resume it during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, with a view to submitting a draft resolution or resolutions for its consideration.

Subject to any directives which the General Assembly might give in that connection, it is recommended that the Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace reconvene its meetings during the fiftieth session of the Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 10?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 37 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions: draft resolution (A/49/L.70)

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Antigua and Barbuda to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.70.

Mr. Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda): Two weeks ago, on 4, 5 and 6 September, a terrible natural disaster struck the vulnerable small island States of the eastern Caribbean. A hurricane, unprecedented in both size and fury, unleashed wind gusts of more than 160 miles per hour stretching over a 700-mile area. Pounding surf and sheets of rain accompanied this furious hurricane. Death and destruction followed in its path on virtually every island. More than $1 billion worth of damage was caused to businesses, homes, schools, churches and government buildings; electricity and telephone delivery systems were completely destroyed in several island countries, and our hospitals were especially hard hit.

In the light of the damage caused to the vulnerable Member States by this natural disaster, and taking into account the urgency of the needs of the citizens of our small island countries, a draft resolution has been circulated among Member States. We seek the Assembly's support for draft resolution A/49/L.70.

This draft resolution mirrors another adopted by the General Assembly, in 1989, when a similar hurricane struck. Its preambular paragraphs make reference to earlier resolutions of the General Assembly which addressed natural disasters in the Caribbean region and note the efforts made by Governments of the region, and others, to initiate the process of reconstruction. Operative paragraph 1 expresses solidarity and support for the afflicted States, and operative paragraph 2 expresses the General Assembly's appreciation to all States and United Nations bodies which have provided emergency relief to the affected countries thus far. In operative paragraph 3 the draft resolution urges all States to contribute generously to the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction effort under way in the affected countries. In operative paragraph 4 the resolution seeks the collaboration of international financial institutions and various bodies and agencies of the United Nations system for the purpose of mobilizing resources in order to help the Governments of the affected countries. In operative paragraph 5 the resolution seeks the issuance of a report during the fiftieth session which would make it possible for Member States to be informed of the steps taken by the various United Nations bodies and agencies in response to this natural disaster.

I wish to point out that prior to hurricane Luis, Antigua and Barbuda was preparing to receive one half of the population of neighbouring Montserrat, since a volcano on Montserrat was threatening to erupt. Today, because thousands are homeless in Antigua and Barbuda, we are unable to provide, on our own, a safe refuge for our brethren from Montserrat. At the same time, homes and other buildings were damaged in Montserrat by Hurricane Luis, and the volcano there still threatens to erupt. United Nations agencies had been working closely with Antigua and Barbuda to provide for those Montserratians made destitute by the volcano. The

hurricane has compounded the situation on Montserrat and in Antigua and Barbuda.

Tourism, the mainstay of Antigua and Barbuda's economy, is at a standstill, since many of our hotels located on the beaches of Antigua and Barbuda have been damaged. The inability to provide electricity, telephone service and running water prevents an immediate start-up of our very valuable tourism industry.

The banana industry of Dominica has been dealt another devastating blow. Electricity and running water have yet to be restored, and telephone communication to Dominica is virtually non-existent.

An estimated 60 per cent of the homes in Saint Kitts and Nevis were damaged by Hurricane Luis. The main hospital had several portions of its roof blown off. The damage is estimated at $60 million.

I wish to thank the following countries, States Members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, for their assistance to my country during this time of need: the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela — indeed, all of the Caribbean Community and all States Members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. From outside our region, we have received the assistance of the Governments of Australia, Canada, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. We have also made contact with other Governments from outside our region and anticipate assistance from them.

The fury of Hurricane Luis has once again proved the vulnerability of all of our small island States, and with the season not yet over, we can only pray that our islands will escape further devastation. The tragedy of global warming, we are told, is that we can expect many more of these furious storms in the future.

I have been authorized by the administering Power to note that the people of Saint Maarten, in the Netherlands Antilles, wish also to be considered in this draft resolution. A proposal has been made to include Saint Maarten, Netherlands Antilles, in the title of this draft resolution and to add, in the second, third and sixth preambular paragraphs and operative paragraphs 1 and 4 the words,

"and the people of Saint Maarten, Netherlands Antilles".

It is our expectation that this oral amendment will meet with the approval of the sponsors and other Member States.

May I list the sponsors we have thus far secured for this draft resolution: Algeria, Argentina, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cape Verde, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Jamaica, Kuwait, Mexico, Micronesia, Niger, Nicaragua, the Netherlands, Paraguay, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Senegal, Seychelles, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sweden, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Viet Nam and Venezuela.

It is our hope that we will never have to come back to the General Assembly for yet another resolution having to do with a natural disaster caused by another hurricane in our region.

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/49/L.70, entitled "Emergency assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Montserrat and St. Kitts and Nevis", as orally revised by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/49/L.70, as orally revised?

The draft resolution, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 49/21 P).

The President *(interpretation from French):* May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 37 (b)?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* May I also take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 37 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33 *(continued)*

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (A/49/47)

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly has before it a draft decision contained in paragraph 17 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group (A/49/47).

I wish to express my sincere thanks to His Excellency Mr. Fredrik Wilhelm Breitenstein, the Permanent Representative of Finland, and to His Excellency Mr. Nitya Pibulsonggram, the Permanent Representative of Thailand, who so ably conducted the discussions and complex negotiations of the Working Group. I also wish to express my appreciation for the constructive participation of Member States in the deliberations of the Working Group.

The Assembly will now take action on the draft decision contained in paragraph 17 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (document A/49/47).

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Italy.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): I wish to express the satisfaction of the Italian delegation at the commitment that everyone has shown over the last few weeks to come to an agreement on the text of the report of the Open-ended Working Group, which the Assembly has before it today. Equally satisfying in our opinion is the compromise solution reached after long discussion, namely to circulate as an official document of the General Assembly a single compendium including the valuable joint assessment, prepared by the two Vice-Chairmen in their personal capacity, of the two rolling papers on clusters 1 and 2, as well as proposals and contributions presented by individual countries and groups of countries.

These documents, as a whole, appear to deserve adequate circulation and visibility since they provide a reliable picture of the complexity of the exercise under way, of the progress made in terms of clarification of respective positions, and of the distance that continues to separate these positions. As the report states,

> "Discussions also showed that important differences continue to exist in key issues before the Open-ended Working Group, and, therefore, further in-depth consideration of these issues is still required". (*A/49/47, para. 16*)

Since the beginning of this exercise, Italy has made every effort to make a constructive contribution to the work and was the first to present a detailed and comprehensive proposal to expand the Security Council, a proposal that was progressively refined in the light of indications made during the debate. We are very pleased that the revised version of our proposal, dated 15 May 1995, is included in the compendium that will be circulated as a General Assembly document. In it, we propose to address the demand for a genuine reform of the Security Council which would take into account the many needs felt by a great number and variety of countries, large and small, rather than solely by the small number of pretenders which aspire to a status of eternal and anachronistic privilege.

We are firmly convinced that 50 years after the birth of the United Nations the Security Council must be reformed to make it more representative, democratic and transparent, not just in words, but in deeds. To this end, we believe it is indispensable that there be a geographical rebalancing of its composition and easier access to a seat for all countries, especially for the 79 countries, including some of the founding Members, which have thus far never been elected — and not by choice — as well as for the 40 which have served only once. The perpetuation of a situation harmful to some 119 Members can no longer be tolerated. The reforms must remedy this situation.

In this same spirit, we must engage in a profound review of the Council's working methods and its relations with the general membership of the United Nations and with other bodies of the Organization. To this end, allow me to express Italy's deep dissatisfaction over the fact

that because of objections raised by no more than three or four countries the concept of democracy appears in paragraph 14 of the report to have been supported by "a large number of delegations", unlike the other inspiring principles of the reforms, on which there had rather been consensus. We are strongly convinced that, as pointed out by others during last week's debate, this "large number" of delegations represents the overwhelming majority of the countries that are participating in the exercise.

Apart from any restrictive definition of the concept of democracy, the need for democratization of the Security Council is, in our view, widely felt by the States Members of the United Nations, by the international community and, above all, by the peoples of the world, and represents perhaps the prime mover of the current exercise.

In closing, Sir, allow me on the occasion of the last meeting of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly to express to you the appreciation and gratitude of my country for the ability and dedication with which over the past year you have guided the work of the body that is the direct representative of the general membership of the United Nations.

The President *(interpretation from French):* May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 16 *(continued)*

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(a) Election of twelve members of the World Food Council

The President *(interpretation from French):* In accordance with resolution 3348 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974, the General Assembly elects the members of the World Food Council upon nomination by the Economic and Social Council.

Members will recall that at the 75th and 97th plenary meetings, held on 5 December 1994 and 28 February 1995, the Assembly elected 10 States, namely, Albania, Angola, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, the Marshall Islands, the Russian Federation and Uganda, as members of the World Food Council.

The General Assembly then decided to keep the sub-item on the agenda of the forty-ninth session in order to enable the Assembly to act on the election, upon nomination by the Economic and Social Council, of the two remaining members from the Western European and other States.

It is my understanding that the Economic and social Council has postponed the nominations for the two remaining members from the Western European and other States for a term of office expiring on 31 December 1997. The Economic and Social Council further postponed nominations for the one member from the Eastern European States and one member from the western European and other States for a term of office expiring on 31 December 1996, which had been postponed at the forty-eighth session of the Assembly.

As members know, this sub-item has been included in the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 16?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* May I take it that it is also the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 16 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 47

Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security

The President *(interpretation from French):* Members will recall that, on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it the draft agenda of the fiftieth session?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* This concludes our consideration of agenda item 47.

Agenda item 48

Launching of global negotiations on international economic cooperation for development

The President *(interpretation from French):* In connection with this item, representatives will recall that, on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. As members know, this item has been included in the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion on this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* This concludes our consideration of agenda item 48.

Agenda item 49

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

The President *(interpretation from French):* Members will recall that, on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-ninth session. As members know, this item has been included in the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion on agenda item 49 at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* This concludes our consideration of agenda item 49.

Agenda item 50

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

The President *(interpretation from French):* Members may recall that, on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fiftieth session?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* This concludes our consideration of agenda item 50.

Agenda item 51

Question of Cyprus

The President *(interpretation from French):* Members may recall that, on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session, but deferred a decision on the allocation of the item to an appropriate time during the session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fiftieth session?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* This concludes our consideration of agenda item 51.

Agenda item 52

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

The President (*interpretation from French*): Members may recall that, on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to include agenda item 52 in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fiftieth session?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 127 and 130 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda

Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

The President (*interpretation from French*): Members may recall that the Assembly adopted resolutions 49/20 A and B, as well as decision 49/481 on these two items.

As Members are aware, the item on the financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda has been included in the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of items 127 and 130 at the present session?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 131

Financing of the United Nations Military Liaison Team in Cambodia

The President (*interpretation from French*): Members will recall that the Assembly adopted decision 49/485 on agenda item 131. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of this item at the present session?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President (*interpretation from French*): I should like to remind delegations that the following agenda items, on which action has been taken at previous meetings, have remained open for consideration during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Item 11 Report of the Security Council

Item 34 The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

Item 39 The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Item 40 Question of Palestine

Item 43 Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

Item 44 Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1995

Item 77 United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Item 79 Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects

Item 97 Advancement of women

Item 100 Human rights questions

Item 104 Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

Item 107 Programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995

Item 109 Improving the financial situation of the United Nations

Item 112 Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Item 116 Financing of the United Nations peace-keeping forces in the Middle East

Item 117 Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission

Item 118 Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991)

Item 119 Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Item 120 Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador

Item 121 Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

Item 122 Financing of the United Nations Protection Force

Item 123 Financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II

Item 124 Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique

Item 125 Financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus

Item 126 Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

Item 128 Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti

Item 129 Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

Item 146 Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Item 162 Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan

Item 163 Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

As members are aware, these items have been included in the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of these items at the present session?

It was so decided.

Closing address by the President

The President (*interpretation from French*): As we come to the end of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, I am moved by two emotions. The first — why not admit it? — is one of pride: the pride of having embodied, in my humble person, so prestigious an institution, in which peoples continue to place their greatest hopes. I have had the opportunity to accept invitations to visit many Member States, and on each of my journeys I was able to confirm the prominent place our Organization holds, not only for political leaders, but also in the concerns of national opinion. I was able to see that the purposes and principles of our Organization continue to be the supreme reference points that they were at the end of the Second World War. Wherever I went — in America, Asia, Europe and at home in Africa — I was able to assess the scope, the currency and the solidity of the founding act of 1945. Through the expressions of sympathy, friendship or even affection that were extended to me, I was always fully aware that what was being honoured, first and foremost, was the Organization on whose behalf I spoke.

This attention has even assumed a special meaning this year as we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I can bear solemn witness to the fact that, half a century after the creation of the United Nations, faith in its ideals remains steadfast. This faith has triumphed over all the many tribulations, crises and bloody conflicts experienced by our planet. Peace, social progress, international cooperation, respect for human rights, set down in letters of gold in the United Nations Charter, remain today the governing words of international relations.

I should like to add that, through me, it was the General Assembly — what it represents and symbolizes — that was being hailed. The diversity and richness of the "peoples of the United Nations" set the tone for our Assembly. It is hardly surprising that, throughout these past 50 years, it has been the strongest bulwark of our Organization and that it has been able, at

the most trying moments, to preserve a space for dialogue, without which world peace would certainly have been at greater risk. I have already had the opportunity to discuss the invaluable role played by the General Assembly: it has always been at the crossroads of history, and its tireless action, taken with the hopes of peoples in mind, has allowed it to lend greater weight to the very concept of an international community.

In this period when uncertainty is vying with anxiety, when pernicious destabilizing factors are as numerous as they are pernicious, when doubts sometimes arise about the capacity of the United Nations to lay the foundations of a new international society, the General Assembly is once again in the spotlight. We must therefore live up to what is expected of us.

This leads me to share with the Assembly the second emotion I am experiencing at the end of this forty-ninth session. I must confess to being torn between the certainty that we did our best to carry out the mission conferred upon us and the regret that we were not always able to find solutions to questions affecting both our Organization and the future of the international community. If problems as crucial as those of the reform of the Security Council and the financial situation of the Organization — to mention only two — remain unsolved, it is not for lack of effort on our part. But let there be no misunderstanding: the United Nations will not be able to meet the challenges facing our planet if its structural and financial means do not become better adapted to its fundamental missions. Peace-keeping — and for the moment I shall limit myself to that topic — cannot but seem incomplete if we do not tackle the causes of war. Where poverty takes hold, where frustrations and exclusions accumulate, there is a great likelihood that hatred, which fuels conflicts, will emerge.

After those preliminary comments, I should like to share very bluntly with the Assembly some of my thoughts on the present session, which is now concluding.

First of all, I can say with certainty that the United Nations is more central than ever to international relations.

The general debate at the forty-ninth session once again gave the representatives of Member States the opportunity to express their views on the key topics of our time. While stating their positions — sometimes divergent — on major issues, 45 Heads of State and Government clearly reaffirmed their confidence in the Organization. More than ever the General Assembly is serving as a forum for global discussion, in terms of the number and position of those who address it, on the one hand, and the diversity of the topics considered, or even the range of the 328 resolutions adopted during the forty-ninth session, on the other hand. During this past session, the universality of the Organization was further enhanced with the admission, as the 185th Member State of the United Nations, of the Republic of Palau, the last Trust Territory established by the Charter in 1945. I see this event as an illustration of the role played by the General Assembly in the emancipation of peoples, in accordance with their right to self-determination.

I will not give an exhaustive account of our activities. I will mention only a few of them that bear out the standard-setting mandate that has also been conferred on us.

At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted three instruments of major legal and political importance: the Declaration on the Enhancement of Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Arrangements or Agencies in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security; the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism; and the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Our work was also marked by the entry into force, on 16 November 1994, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Agreement of 28 July 1994 on the implementation of Part IX of that Convention. In May 1995, the General Assembly elected the judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994.

During the forty-ninth session, I endeavoured to echo the concerns of Member States in seeking the greatest effectiveness of the Organization. In that spirit, in addition to the existing Working Group on the increase in the membership of the Security Council, three new Working Groups were established with mandates to consider, respectively, the financial situation of the Organization; development problems within the framework of the Agenda for Development; and enhancement of the global effectiveness of the United Nations system. These are basic questions, and the responses they receive will determine to a great extent

whether the United Nations achieves its goals for the twenty-first century.

An Open-ended Working Group set up during the forty-eighth session took up the question of restructuring the Security Council. That Group, entrusted with examining the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, organized its work around two clusters of items: on the one hand, those relating to the composition of the Council, including permanent members, non-permanent members and new categories of members; and, on the other hand, those relating to enhancing the working methods, procedures, effectiveness and productivity of the Council, and its relationship with other United Nations organs.

Substantive discussions were held during the present session, but the questions taken up are so complex that we must continue to consider them if we are to achieve significant results. However, though we are far from full agreement, we now have a better idea of the various positions on key areas of these questions. In any event, I believe that we will eventually need political will on the highest level if we are to be successful in this undertaking.

Along these lines, the Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace continued its consultations within the context of the four specific sub-groups. Detailed discussions took place within each of these sub-groups and will continue during the next session.

With respect to the Organization's precarious financial situation, to which the Secretary-General drew the General Assembly's attention in his statement dated 12 October 1994, a High-level Open-ended Working Group was set up. I had the honour of presiding over this Group, whose work was guided by the desire to ensure a better financial foundation for the Organization. The measures recommended by the Group, as well as the report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Working Group on the Implementation of the Principle of the Capacity to Pay as the fundamental criterion in determining the scale of assessments for contributions to the regular budget, were submitted to the General Assembly. Since agreement was not reached on many points, the Assembly requested the Working Group to continue its work during the fiftieth session.

With respect more particularly to the need to improve the management of peace-keeping operations, the General Assembly adopted a set of procedures aimed at rationalizing the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations.

The General Assembly also continued its consultations on the Agenda for Development. In this connection, an ad hoc open-ended working group was established to formulate proposals that might lead to the final adoption of an action-oriented Agenda for Development. The Working Group made considerable progress, but owing to time constraints was unable to complete its work. That Group also will continue its work during the fiftieth session.

Finally, the General Assembly has just set up a high-level open-ended working group on the strengthening of the United Nations system, whose recommendations will help to enhance the global effectiveness of the Organization.

Generally speaking, our expectations are such that any difficulties experienced by the United Nations lead to deep disappointment, commensurate with the hopes that have been dashed. And then the Organization is accused not of doing too much, as it has been in the past, but rather of not doing enough. This tendency to question the United Nations and to have such high expectations of it is certainly a reflection of the changing global environment. The General Assembly, for instance, which in the past met only on rare occasions between January and September, is now in almost permanent session throughout the year.

Over the past nine months I have presided over, in addition to the meetings of the General Assembly, the work of three working groups — I was of course, supported effectively by the Vice-Presidents — and I undertook consultations for the establishment of a fourth working group. I also made many official visits at the invitation of Governments of Member States.

As can be seen, the presidency of the General Assembly now involves many activities, both at and away from Headquarters. In this respect, it is appropriate to recall General Assembly resolution 46/77 on the institutionalization of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and the support provided to that Office in the carrying out of the President's mandate.

In order for the President of the General Assembly to carry out all these activities, it is essential that this resolution be implemented and that predictable and appropriate budgetary resources be released for that

purpose. It is high time the General Assembly considered this question.

The second thought I wanted to share with the Assembly relates to the need for the renewal of the United Nations. This need is indisputably linked to the new political conditions that in recent years have made it possible for the Security Council to exercise with greater determination than ever its own peace-keeping responsibilities. From 1989-1990 on, the United Nations has made a major commitment to peace-keeping operations and to the establishment of legal, political, economic and social structures for securing peace.

The action of the Security Council, the permanent body of limited membership that acts on behalf of all the States Members of the Organization, has become essential. However, that action must take account of the great diversity of the international community and adapt itself accordingly, because nothing could be more dangerous than the sense that the institution bearing primary responsibility for peace-keeping acts only as an instrument in the service of certain Powers.

No one denies that the Council has exceptional decision-making powers or that it imposes sanctions. However, Security Council action would benefit from enjoying the broadest possible consensus if partiality is to be avoided.

It would not be desirable for the institutional imbalance between the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations to be exacerbated. Such an imbalance would reflect an erroneous interpretation of the Charter, which, while opting for efficiency in the field of peace-keeping, has relinquished none of the competences of the General Assembly, an institution embodying the principle of the sovereign equality of the States Members of the Organization.

I have also reflected on the question of international peace and security. Undeniably, the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must be noted as a major achievement in assuring international security. We are aware of the decisive role played by the General Assembly in bringing about that agreement, which was concluded on 11 May 1995 in New York.

With respect to hotbeds of tension in general, when the Security Council was paralysed by the use of the veto we observed the General Assembly's vigorous use of its powers emanating from the Charter, in particular Article 11. On many occasions it was involved in peace-keeping activities. Even if the world political situation is different from that which prevailed a few years ago, the General Assembly cannot be excluded from questions having to do with international peace and security. In this field, the work of our Organization must be preventive in nature, an issue that was very close to the heart of former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld. Preventive diplomacy is one of the fundamental bases of the policy defined by the present Secretary-General in his "An Agenda for Peace". In this context, the General Assembly must have a greater role, and it is desirable that the recommendations of the Assembly's Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace contribute to the preparation of resolutions for the strengthening of peace.

By reason of its universal composition and the range of viewpoints expressed in it, the General Assembly is the organ in the best position to fulfil the function of conflict prevention. From this standpoint, and without any prejudice to the competences of the Security Council, the Assembly must remain at the heart of the peace-keeping system as an organ for deliberation and prevention.

There is another sphere in which the role of the Assembly is essential, namely that of fact-finding, which is so important in the quest for solutions or conflict prevention. Here, again, the work of the Assembly can reinforce and complement that of the Security Council with a view to greater effectiveness.

I have also considered the problems of the financing of the Organization and of its actions for peace. As we all know, this question is vital for the future of the Organization and therefore to the maintenance of peace.

The financial situation of the United Nations is one of grave crisis. The Secretary-General addressed the General Assembly on this subject on 12 October 1994, but he had also sounded the alarm on the financial picture on 22 June, before the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the Organization.

The crisis is due, above all, to the fact that Member States do not pay in full and on time their financial contributions to the various budgets of the Organization.

As of 10 August 1995, the unpaid balance of contributions amounted to $3.9 billion, of which $858.2

million corresponded to the regular budget and $3 billion to the budget for peace-keeping operations. Obviously, this situation affects the functioning and the effectiveness of the United Nations in all fields, especially that of peace-keeping.

In the course of this session the General Assembly has reaffirmed the need to comply with Article 17 of the Charter, under which the financing of peace-keeping operations is the collective responsibility of all Member States. In "An Agenda for Peace", the Secretary-General made some proposals concerning this issue, and some of them have been adopted by the General Assembly and implemented. What is really called for is that we should reflect on the matter together. More than ever before, the General Assembly must take the initiatives required in such a situation in order to free the Organization from the financial uncertainties now affecting it and to free it also from the control exercised in this area by certain Member States. In this regard, the boldest of measures should be envisaged to provide the Organization with appropriate and predictable resources. These solutions must in any event take into account the capacity of Member States to pay.

The relationship between the United Nations and the regional organizations was of particular interest to me.

This seems to me to be one of the most important questions for the future of international relations. The maintenance of peace calls for the implementation of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter. The Security Council attaches great importance to the role of regional arrangements and organizations, and it considers it indispensable that their efforts be coordinated with those of the United Nations. In its resolution 47/71 *(para. 52)* the General Assembly expressly encouraged regional and subregional organizations to cooperate with the United Nations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

The role of the General Assembly is therefore vital. Because of its universal composition, it is the venue *par excellence* for debating problems of regional security with a view to seeking viable solutions aimed at the establishment of lasting regional peace, which is a prerequisite for any form of development.

I have also reflected on the relationship between the United Nations and world public opinion, and I have arrived at the conviction that the General Assembly must be the interpreter of international public opinion.

For 50 years now, the General Assembly has been echoing international public opinion by contributing, through its many resolutions and conventions, to a significant evolution of positive international law.

The role of the General Assembly has also contributed to the international community's heightened awareness of problems related to economic and social development.

One major innovation of the General Assembly along these lines is the holding of large world conferences. These conferences make it possible for broader debate to take place, and they generate concrete programmes of action. Dealing with issues from human rights in general to the specific situation of women, from sustainable development to the prevention of natural disasters, from population problems to those of the environment and from habitats to social development, they endeavour to reflect mankind's aspirations for greater well-being. The participation of non-governmental organizations in these conferences and the ever greater mobilization of public opinion to which they lead are to be commended.

We welcome the considerable progress achieved at Beijing on the long road towards the advancement of women.

I want again to stress the decisive role of the General Assembly in all these conferences.

I turn now to my own continent, Africa. At its substantive session, held at Geneva this summer, the Economic and Social Council focused its high-level debate on the development of Africa. It recalled the relevance and timeliness of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, along with the necessary framework of partnership between Africa and the international community, within which the objectives of the New Agenda should be attained. Unfortunately, we must note that, in the context of a globalized economy, Africa, despite courageous reform and considerable national efforts at adjustment, remains a marginalized continent with no real share in the overall growth of the world economy.

Indeed, the simplified image of Africa too often seen in the international media does not reflect the revolution — let us not be afraid of a word — in which Africa is engaged. In the face of growing economic and social difficulties, our States are resolutely undertaking

reforms aimed at improving our economies and at restoring basic economic balance. We are also promoting the State of law and the rules of democracy. The success of such undertakings depends on the support of our peoples. No reform whatsoever can succeed without the prior consent of the peoples concerned. I must recall that our peoples have suffered from the effects of the austerity policies imposed by international financial institutions. But we must be careful not to cross the threshold of the unbearable; not to rend social cohesion and reduce the ability of African States to maintain it. There are tragic examples of the consequences of such a situation.

The courageous efforts being made in Africa must be supported by more sustained action by industrialized countries. We must move from rhetoric to action, from declarations of intention to implementation. More than ever before, the adoption of an agenda for development must mark an opportunity to put the United Nations back at the centre of international activities for economic and social development.

The United Nations must therefore have the resources needed to promote world peace, both in terms of the diplomatic and military operations necessary to ensure the security of individuals and peoples, and in terms of development operations for the greater well-being of all mankind. Only concerted action can enable us and future generations to live in peace. To tackle global problems that have no borders and that threaten our individual and collective existence, solidarity among peoples is more necessary than ever before. Suffice it to mention problems related to drugs, to the deterioration of the environment, to the misuse of rare and non-renewable resources, to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and to poverty.

The United Nations has an essential role to play on all these fronts. While it is true that we must demand of the Organization greater effectiveness and better coordination of its efforts, we must also give it the means to implement all the resolutions we adopt and to realize the hopes we place in it.

If we fail to back all our statements with adequate means, the Organization can only fall short of our peoples' expectations. This is a risk we cannot and do not wish to run, for all of us who for years have been observing the development of mankind know that preventive diplomacy and development assistance are far less costly than conflict and war. We also know that combating poverty in all its forms is the most certain way of promoting peace on Earth, of facilitating trade and of combating the other global problems I have just set out.

We also know full well that all States without exception are facing considerable budgetary problems. The temptation is great to reduce the share of these budgets devoted to United Nations peace and development operations; we understand this. But in a time of hardship we must be all the more careful about our decisions on the allocation of resources. We must ensure that economizing today does not lead to greater expenditures in the future. Sustained and proper financing of United Nations activities, accompanied by controls of quality and effectiveness to be sure, is a vital investment in the future of us all. Not to accomplish this because of short-term budgetary constraints would jeopardize long-term global development prospects. In each of our countries and collectively, we must reexamine the contribution and the effectiveness of the United Nations. I am convinced that this would enable us to better understand why the United Nations must enjoy the continued and increased support of the international community.

Before concluding I want to thank everyone who has joined me in the inspiring task I have completed.

I dedicate my final thoughts as President of the General Assembly to my country, Côte d'Ivoire, which I have endeavoured to represent with dignity and to the best of my moral and professional ability. I have always viewed my election as a tribute, not to me personally, but to my homeland and to the courageous and pragmatic policy incarnated in the father of the Ivoirian nation, President Félix Houphouët-Boigny. This policy is today continued with unswerving determination and faith by his worthy successor, President Henri Konan Bédié. President Henri Konan Bédié is today leading Côte d'Ivoire towards its great destiny through concrete economic and social achievements and through the consolidation of a democratic system which gives priority to full respect for human rights and for the dignity and civil liberties of all Ivoirians.

I also thank the African Heads of State for their constant support, and to the Organization of African Unity and to the Group of African States at the United Nations for their readiness at all times to help. I thank the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 for their inestimable cooperation. My thanks go also to all the other regional groups at the United Nations, which in a gratifying way extended to me their friendship and

constructive cooperation in the search for solutions to the many problems we faced. All this enabled me to carry out my responsibilities as fully as possible and in the best of conditions.

Let me now convey my sincere thanks to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a brother African whose support has been unfailing.

I also thank the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly and all the other Assembly officers, as well as the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Main Committees and the various working groups, who unfailingly assisted me and helped me accomplish my task. My thanks go also to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, and his colleagues in the Division of General Assembly Affairs, and to the multitude of Secretariat staff members, seen and unseen, such as conference officers, editors, interpreters, translators, secretaries, typists, security staff, messengers, maintenance staff and those with the delicate and highly appreciated task of daily adorning our General Assembly offices with flowers. All helped us, at their respective levels, by carrying out their tasks with professionalism and dedication.

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President (*interpretation from French*): As the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly comes to an end, I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Closure of the forty-ninth session

The President (*interpretation from French*): I declare closed the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.